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**INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN
AND THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

**Letter dated 18 April 2002 from the Ambassador for
Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
the Dominican Republic addressed to the Chairperson
of the Commission on Human Rights at its
fifty-eighth session**

I have the honour to transmit the report on the integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective and progress in this area in the Dominican Republic.

I should be grateful if you would have this report* circulated as a document of the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session.

(Signed) Rhadys ABREU DE POLANCO
Ambassador

* Annex reproduced as received in the language of submission, Spanish, and in English, only.

Annex

Sir,

Allow me firstly, on behalf of the Dominican Republic, to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson and to offer you our best wishes for the successful conduct of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights. In this statement I shall address the integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective.

The question of the human rights of women has reached a very important stage in the Dominican Republic, as we are now seeing the outcome of participation by the people and, in particular, of the efforts of women over the past decade to reform and modernize the State. Four developments reflect these achievements.

Firstly, with regard to legislative and juridical reform, the enactment and implementation of legislation has strengthened and extended the rights of women. Seven legislative instruments were enacted in the period January 1998-September 2001. These acts implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and legislate on the situation of migrants, health, social security and political participation by women; they thus impact on the discharge of its commitments by the Dominican Republic.

Secondly, there is the establishment of mechanisms and programmes which are directly or indirectly linked to the advancement of women. These include:

Public sector work programmes (areas) and projects for women. Some 20 programmes are available under sectoral institutions in the areas of education, training, health, production, credit, planning and violence, among others. Most of these programmes have been established over the past five years. Some are national in scope, such as the regional coordination undertaken by the sectoral agricultural office for women of the Ministry of Agriculture (with staff in all regions, and all zones and sub-zones of work), and the 37 provincial and municipal offices of the Ministry for Women. In addition the Ministry for Women and the sectoral gender equity and development units have developed 17 projects and programmes, to become operational in all public sector institutions from the beginning of 2002. Current government policy gives priority in these public sector programmes and projects to women who are impoverished, heads of household, single or disabled;

Programmes and projects run by civil society organizations for the establishment of women's rights. The Women's Rights NGO Coordination Bureau alone has 25 member institutions, with a number of projects for the defence, promotion and advancement of women's rights in all areas involving the physical, spiritual and intellectual development of women;

Intersectoral, intrasectoral and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms bringing together the public sector and civil society on the basis of common proposals in 18 bodies including the Inter-Institutional Committee for the Protection of Migrant

Women (CIPROM), the National Commission for the Prevention of and Fight against Domestic Violence (CONAPLUVI) the Sectoral Council for Women, the Intergovernmental Committee against Child Prostitution, the National Commission for Breastfeeding, the National Commission on Maternal Mortality, the Inter-Institutional Commission on Child Development, etc.

Thirdly, the design and formulation of mechanisms for action have already been outlined. The national gender equity plan, the platform for the advancement of Dominican women 1995-2001 and the assessment of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Dominican Republic 1995-2000 are all instruments developed on the basis of coöperation with women's NGOs and public sector institutions. This is also true of the adoption by the Dominican Republic of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

Fourthly, specific activities to defend and promote the human rights of women, such as the women's welcome stations (San Francisco de Macoris and Santiago), strengthening of NGO education programmes for low-income women in rural and urban areas, and expansion of government and non-governmental offices working to defend women's legal rights. Legal procedures governing women detainees have been simplified and some improvement has been noted in the prison infrastructure throughout the country. A support office for reform and modernization of the system of justice has been established, leading to significant improvements in the legal domain for women. In addition, campaigns to disseminate women's rights, largely with regard to violence and political participation and eligibility, have been conducted, although there is no ongoing, systematic dissemination campaign, these having taken place on two occasions, 8 March and 25 November.

While all these mechanisms, instruments and activities cover all aspects of the human rights of women, some areas have been given greater priority, for example, violence, which has been focused on by civil society and the State. However, labour rights, and the economic rights of women, remain on the periphery in efforts to promote women's rights. In this connection article 18, on social rights, of the constitutional reform proposal put forward by women's groups provides that: "The State, through its legislation and policies, shall guarantee the exercise of the economic and social rights of low-income sectors of the population and shall accordingly provide protection and assistance to the most vulnerable groups and sectors. The State shall take appropriate action to combat social problems with the assistance of international agreements and organizations".

The Dominican Republic has taken a number of special measures to promote gender equity: establishment of the Ministry for Women, ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, establishment of sectoral gender equity units, a proposal for coordination between the Ministry for Women and civil society, and elements of social policy and poverty eradication. We also wish to draw particular attention to the legislation increasing the quota for inclusion in lists of candidates and the proposals for constitutional reform made by women's groups, which have been welcomed by the special commission responsible for coordinating participation by civil society in this process. Nevertheless, the process of amending the Civil and Penal Codes remains sluggish. This has been a point of dissent raised in the document on assessment of the Beijing Platform for Action,

since assessment of the reform and updating of the country's legal provisions by the women's movement, the Ministry for Women and women belonging to parties has yet to take place.

The sectoral gender equity and development offices were established under Presidential Decree No. 974-01 of 26 September 2001, with representation in each government ministry under the coordination of the Ministry for Women, with the purpose of incorporating a gender perspective at the national level in the policies, plans, actions programmes and projects of each government ministry. The Decree, in its article 4, provides that each office is to monitor, assess and report every six months to the Ministry for Women on progress in plans, policies and strategies for equality between men and women in addition to coordinating the adjustments needed within each area for implementation of and compliance with the agreements and international commitments signed and undertaken by the Dominican Republic.

This measure is crucial, given the rather scattergun approach of government efforts to achieve gender equity. These units will make it possible to reorder, adapt, coordinate, systematize and optimize the available financial and human resources and to implement consistently the policies devised by the Ministry for Women, with the help of other State institutions (as part of the national gender equity plan), and other measures considered to be important in the periodical adjustments to national gender equity policies.

In July 2001, the Ministry for Women prepared a proposal on coordination with NGOs, which would be based on identifying jointly the ethical principles on which to base the cooperation, coordination and solidarity between the sectors, thereby reaffirming the commitment to "the model of shared responsibility between the State and civil society to promote the exercise of citizenship".

This proposal is a response to the situation already described and is "in the interests of moving beyond the ad hoc and informal nature of the relationship between the State and civil society and of overcoming its weaknesses (lack of accountability, discontinuity, improvisation and informality)" while at the same time enabling the Ministry for Women to exercise the powers attributed to it by law.

The ethical principles set forth in the proposal are respect for the ideological and administrative independence of the parties, transparency in negotiations and discussions on coordinated action and in its implementation, and a commitment to follow up national and international agreements concerning women. It also establishes coordination mechanisms and areas of impact and protection in order to shape the formulation and implementation of government policies and to promote legal reforms, training and internal debate, the joint implementation of projects and monitoring and accountability.

It also aims to institutionalize the participation and input of NGOs and to coordinate moves towards greater efficiency and improved geographic coverage and quality by optimizing resources, institution-building to strengthen the economic and political sustainability of the organizations, insofar as the Ministry for Women can be strengthened, acting as a catalyst in the processes of political and cultural change required to advance gender equity, effectively channelling the demands made by civil society on the State, monitoring each other's fulfilment of commitments and following up the implementation of gender equity legislation.

The Government's social policy is intended to help reduce poverty and to this end priority has been given to the target population of poor women in the country. Three examples of this, as yet uncoordinated, practice are:

The micro, small and medium-sized enterprises programme (PROMIPYME) set up in 1997 to promote competitiveness, efficiency and the comprehensive development of this sector and to create new productive jobs and new sources of income for families has been introduced in all the institutions that make up the Government Welfare Office. One of its policies is to promote women's access to credit. It has been established that in 2001 women accounted for 59 per cent of the skilled population, 30 per cent of trained credit advisers and 53 per cent of the population receiving benefits under the presidential plan to combat poverty. In its strategy to reach its target population, PROMIPYME extends credit lines to seven NGOs, foundations and cooperatives working on microcredit programmes. Two of these organizations work specifically with women, who have received 44 per cent of the loans granted;

Although the presidential plan to combat poverty does not currently have a gender policy, those in charge of it try to favour initiatives and activities that help women by providing financial support for organizations running programmes for poor women, including support for the Ministry for Women. This is reinforced by the fact that over 80 per cent of the employees on its payroll are women, who work in the different technical, managerial and operational agencies regardless of their physical condition, age, social status or geographical location. For 2002 the plan envisions 10 kinds of action designed to contribute to the implementation of the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including in the areas of finance, infrastructure and housing construction and support for the plan to combat domestic violence. Funding programmes for microenterprises and microcredit for women who do not meet the requirements of PROMIPYME and other credit programmes deserve to be highlighted here. The actions envisaged are aimed at lifting disabled and older women, women working in export processing zones (EPZs) or in the sex industry and women migrants out of extreme poverty.

The "decent community" plan, an action plan to reduce poverty, was drawn up by the National Planning Office (CNAPLAN) on the basis of the results of the study focusing on poverty. It also proposes rationalizing welfare spending through inter-institutional coordination that takes the participation of civil society to be a major factor in overcoming poverty. The plan includes:

Support for production cooperatives already initiated by small enterprises for women with the aim of helping reduce female unemployment. An example would be the cooperative of workshops making clothes and other textile products being run by the Ministry for Women at a cost of 60 million Dominican pesos;

Support for vulnerable heads of household by means of vouchers worth 500 pesos a month to purchase services from the Institute for Price Stability (INESPRE) and cheap restaurants. This has benefited 40,000 single mothers who are heads of household, or 60 per cent of all single mothers who are heads of household and who have children below the age of 14 in the areas defined as high priority because of their levels of poverty (of an estimated 167,399 mothers who are heads of household), at a cost of 240 million pesos.

Thank you very much.



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**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**Letter dated 23 April 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of
Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the
Commission on Human Rights**

With reference to documents E/CN.4/2002/164, E/CN.4/2002/165, E/CN.4/2002/166 and E/CN.4/2002/167 of 2 April 2002, circulated by the delegation of Armenia under item 9 of the agenda of the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, I am compelled once again to note with regret that the delegation of Armenia continues to submit grossly distorted information which does not correspond to the facts.

In connection with the documents circulated by the delegation of Armenia, I wish to state that they contain the usual barefaced propagandistic lies which are characteristic of the representatives of Armenia.

I would like to point out that the myth of Armenia's non-participation in the occupation of my country is used by that country with one single purpose - to justify its own crimes perpetrated during the aggression against Azerbaijan. Furthermore, what can be the true worth of the circulated documents and all the statements made by representatives of Armenia, in view of the fact that, in 1989, the Parliament of Armenia, in violation of all the principles and norms of international law, adopted a decision to annex part of the territory of another State - the Nagorny-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan?

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By depicting Armenia's claims over the territory of another independent State Member of the United Nations as the struggle of the Armenian population of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan for self-determination, the representatives of Armenia are attempting to consign to oblivion the well-known facts concerning participation by the armed forces of their country in military operations on Azerbaijani territory, the holding of a significant number of citizens of Azerbaijan in Armenia as hostages and prisoners of war, and many cases of murder and aggression against them. Nor must we forget the terrorist acts committed by Armenia against citizens of my country both in Azerbaijan and in other States.

In this connection I wish to point out that the Republic of Armenia supports terrorism at the State level. Much could be said about the fond friendship between the authorities and ideologues of independent Armenia and Armenian international-style terrorists. I will dwell on only one example: as early as the mid-1990s a campaign was conducted to collect signatures in support of the terrorist Varuzhan Karapetyan, who had been convicted by a French court to life imprisonment for an explosion at a Turkish Airlines luggage counter at Orly Airport in Paris in 1983. The terrorists had calculated that the bomb would explode in the air, but by happy accident the flight was delayed and the deadly device went off on the ground. Eight people died as a result, including six French nationals. There should have been many more victims, according to the terrorists' calculations. As the Armenian mass media boasted, 1,227,473 signatures were collected from Armenian citizens in support of the terrorist. Moreover, in Armenia a school was named after this terrorist, and in Echmiadzin, the "Vatican of Armenia", an exhibition of his works of art was held. These efforts were crowned with success, and in May 2001 the French authorities released the terrorist from prison. Varuzhan Karapetyan then set off for Armenia, where he was welcomed as a national hero. Comments are superfluous, I think.

Concerning the expression "no people - no problem", which representatives of Armenia have added to their armoury and often make use of, I would like to remind you that in 1918 more than half a million Azerbaijanis lived in what is now Armenia. I would like to enquire of the representatives of Armenia as to the fate of these people. I hope the representatives of Armenia are not going to claim that they willingly left the places where they had always lived. Is this not eloquent testimony of the fact that the so-called principle of "no people - no problem" has long since been used in a planned way by the official authorities of Armenia itself?

One of the most monstrous crimes committed by the Armenian occupiers during what we call the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was the savage killing of the Azerbaijani population of the town of Khojaly. In a single night from 25 to 26 February 1992, 613 peaceful inhabitants were slaughtered, including 106 women and 83 children; 487 citizens suffered injuries of various kinds (including 76 minors); and 1,275 people were taken hostage. Although most of them managed to return to their motherland, the fate of 150 individuals is still unknown. Ten years have already passed since the day of that terrible tragedy, the scale and nature of which are fully in keeping with the definition of genocide which was reflected in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948.

The events in the town of Khojaly were witnessed and recorded by independent international sources, who confirmed that Armenia had committed genocide against the Azerbaijani population of the town. The testimony of the independent sources has been circulated by the delegation of Azerbaijan at the current session of the Commission under item 9 of the agenda in document E/CN.4/2002/151 of 22 March 2002. I hoped that the representatives of the Armenian delegation would not deny this fact, which was confirmed by documentary evidence from witnesses from independent international sources.

However, Armenia continues to deny its responsibility for the act of genocide committed against the inhabitants of the town of Khojaly, attempting to falsify the facts and supply its own interpretation of them.

Proof may be found in this excerpt from a letter sent to Alexander Arzoumanian, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, on 24 March 1997, by Holly Cartner, the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki:

"As Executive Director of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki (formerly Helsinki Watch), I wish to respond to the March 3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement regarding the ... slaughter of Azeri civilians in the town of Khojaly in Nagorno Karabakh. In it, the Ministry argues that the Popular Front of Azerbaijan was responsible for the civilian deaths, supporting this argument by referring to an interview with [the] former President [of Azerbaijan Mr.] Ayaz Mutalibov and, incredibly, to a 1992 report by our organization. The report, *Bloodshed in the Caucasus: Escalation of the Armed Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh*, documents violations of humanitarian law in the conflict committed by both Azerbaijani and ... Armenian forces. Neither our overview and version of the events, nor the individual interviews with Azeri refugees from Khojaly and other villages in Nagorno Karabakh published in the report could ... support the notion that Azerbaijani forces wilfully prevented the evacuation of civilians or that they shot their own citizens. We are deeply distressed that the Ministry has, wittingly or unwittingly, linked our report to views which we reject and which our report does not reflect.

"Yet we place direct responsibility for the civilian deaths with ... Armenian forces. Indeed, neither our report nor that of Memorial includes any evidence to support the argument that Azerbaijani forces obstructed the flight of, or fired on Azeri civilians.

"We welcome the use of our reports by governments and intergovernmental organizations, and we sincerely hope that there will be no further misrepresentation regarding the contents of our 1992 report."

I would also like to refer to the same authoritative independent source, concerning whose impartiality the representatives of Armenia can hardly harbour any doubts. In its publication *Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh*, Human Rights Watch states that from the legal viewpoint, the participation of Armenian armed forces in military actions on the territory of Azerbaijan makes Armenia a party to an international armed conflict, specifically that between the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

I should also like to draw your attention to the fact that the delegation of Armenia is circulating for a second time, without modification, the information contained in document E/CN.4/2002/164 of 2 April 2002. I wish to emphasize that this is at variance with the established procedure concerning the submission of material to the secretariat and its distribution.

Concerning the issue of the events in Sumgait, which was raised by the Armenian delegation, I wish to remind you that the leading figure in the pogroms in Sumgait was a certain Edvard Grigoryan, an Armenian born in the town of Sumgait, who took an active and direct part in the killings and attacks on Armenians during the pogroms in the Armenian neighbourhoods.

On 22 December 1989 the Supreme Court of the Azerbaijani Republic sentenced Grigoryan to 12 years' imprisonment. The court found him to be one of the organizers of the disorder and large-scale slaughter. Written evidence from witnesses and victims showed that Grigoryan had a list of flats in which Armenians lived. All his Armenian victims agreed that Grigoryan was one of the organizers of and active participants in the pogroms and violence which occurred in Sumgait.

Concerning the issue of peace talks under the auspices of the CSCE Minsk group, which was raised by the representatives of Armenia, it must be recognized with regret that as a result of Armenia's destructive position, the negotiating process is currently deadlocked.

I wish to underline once again that, despite the extremely uncompromising and aggressive stance adopted by Armenia, Azerbaijan remains committed to the peaceful settlement of the armed conflict. The relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the decisions of CSCE and other international organizations on the conflict continue to form the basis for the settlement of this tragic conflict.

Armenia must acknowledge that it can guarantee its own security only by establishing relations of good neighbourliness and cooperation with all the States in the region.

We call on Armenia to take a civilized approach to the settlement of the conflict on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized frontiers of States, and also for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that Armenia's membership of the Commission on Human Rights runs counter to common sense. I have no doubt that the time will come when Armenia will receive its due at the hands of the international community.

I request you to circulate this letter as an official document of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Murad NAJAFOV
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
